2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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181 in their spare time, and chiefly in the dry season when there is no farm
241 work. They are exceedingly few in numbers—one or two in a settlement
463 —and their work is of mediocre quality. The only blacksmiths in Tale-
land are about a dozen men of the Sakpee clan of Tenzugu, and only one
[326] of them derives a substantial part of his livelihood from his craft. A leather-worker or two, a potteress, a sewer of caps, may be found in almost every settlement. Some men and women who are more skilful than their neighbours at making articles of common use such as hen-coops, baskets, bows, adze-shafts, &c., are in the habit of making a few for sale
[465] every dry season. The only specialized occupation is that of the diviner, and it, also, is a part-time occupation in addition to farming, though a popular diviner, making perhaps a shilling or eighteen pence a day, may farm less land than he normally would. Diviners are numerous. There may be as many as ten or twenty in a large settlement, but only one or two of them will earn more than a few pence a day by divining.

British Rule and Contact with Western Civilization

636 Until the time of my first visit to Taleland the natives had been very
177 little influenced by the agencies of British government and of European
168 civilization that are active in these parts. The main roads skirt Taleland so that the flow of north- and south-bound traffic by-passes the largest part
167 of the area. Nevertheless, these roads have served to open up Taleland to a wider sphere of intercourse with other parts of the Gold Coast than was possible twenty years before. Political and social conditions made it impossible for people to travel freely beyond a radius of a few miles from their own settlements in former days. To-day young men and even women go in increasing numbers every year, in the dry season, to Tamale, Kumasi, or the coast towns. Some go to visit friends or relatives, some carry fowls for sale, others go as seasonal labourers, and others go to work abroad for a term of years. In 1923 the Administration of the Northern Territories reluctantly agreed to assist in the recruitment of labour for the mines and cocoa farms of Ashanti and the colony. The experiment failed and was soon abandoned. Nowadays labour migration from the Northern Territories is entirely voluntary. It has become linked up with the normal economic life of the natives. Whereas, in former years, a young man moved out temporarily to the periphery of settlement on account of a shortage of land in his natal community, nowadays he often goes to Ashanti or the mines as a labourer. The cessation of agricultural activity in the dry season makes it easy for a young man to get away for a few months without loss to the routine of farming.

167 Economic incentives, which the natives sum up as 'the desire for
464 money', therefore lie behind much labour migration in the Northern Territories. And the value of money may be gauged from the fact that
[435] a hen could be bought for 6*d*. to 1*s*., a cow in good condition for £2. 10*s*., and a dish of porridge enough for a satisfying meal for 1/10 of a penny in any market in 1934–7. But there are other incentives as well. Curiosity, and the desire to see the places and experience the life which those who return from a stay abroad describe to their fellows at home, stimulate many a youth to go south for a short or long period. And friction with

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and stationary form of hoe culture in which the volume of output is a direct product of human skill and muscle. The family group which produces the food, shelter, raiment, utensils, and weapons needed for its own subsistence can work only a limited amount of land. Wage labour is only sporadically employed for very short periods and to a negligible extent; twenty or thirty years ago it was almost non-existent. For technical and climatic reasons it is generally impossible for a subsistence unit to produce a regular surplus over current needs. And any surplus produced during any year is used up in meeting social or ritual obligations, in renewing the household's productive and living equipment, or in purchasing small numbers of live-stock destined to be used up, sooner or later, for obtaining wives or discharging social and ritual obligations.

The most valuable durable economic resource of the Tallensi is land; but as no rent, tax, or tribute is paid for the use of land, it would not profit a man to buy land he and his family could not work even in those parts where the sale of land is not a sacrilege. Nor would it be to the advantage of the head of a maximal lineage or clan to have authority over the land of another clan. He received no tax or tribute from his own clansmen, and the idea of exacting any such payments from others would never have occurred to him. In any case he had no means of enforcing such demands.

The scale of differences in wealth is narrow and was narrower in the past when there was no possibility of obtaining money by labour abroad or local trade. The stage has not yet been reached where a family group which has more resources than its neighbours thereby endows its members with permanent economic advantages or acquires, for any of them, special political or social powers and privileges.[1] The economic organization of the Tallensi was entirely, and to a great extent still is, a non-competitive, little differentiated, self-sufficient, stationary, subsistence economy. It acts as a stabilizing factor in the social system. It does not give rise, as yet, to social ties and cleavages cutting across those established by genealogical, local, and ritual principles. Economic incentives and interests did not influence the relations of clans with one another in the past, and did not therefore influence the course or aims of warfare.

That Tale warfare was a function of the segmentary structure of the society and not of political or economic ambitions is even clearer from the records of small-scale fights. It happened, quite often, that clans which were allies in general wars by reason of clanship or other structural ties fought among themselves. Like general wars, these local, interclan fights were kindled by such things as the abduction of a wife, quarrels over bride-price payments, the slaying of a man in a dispute between members of different clans or in a cattle raid, or simply by young men flaunting the corporate unity and independence of their clan in the face of another clan. Once started they followed the usual course of all social activities by setting the lineage system in motion and involving the patri-

[1] Except for a handful of chiefs and the Golibdaana mentioned later; but even in their case the absence of facilities for investing wealth in land or other durable (capital) goods means that their wealth is rapidly dissipated by sons and grandsons.